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members of the family were held responsible for debts incurred by the family before its division. The women members, however, were exempt from this obligation.

Inheritance and individual property rights of women in the social group of the Georgian Highlanders were entirely different from those of men. As mentioned before, women received no part of the family property in its division. Nevertheless, they were not left entirely helpless. Women were allowed to possess their own capital, consisting of money, household utensils, domestic animals, etc.

After performing her household duties and field work, a woman's time was her own. In her leisure she was free to do whatever she wished for her own benefit, and this time was usually employed in enlarging her personal capital (*satavno*). This *satavno* is accumulated gradually, its amount depending upon the woman's industry and ability. Women begin to work for their *satavno* in early childhood. Thus, for example, it was no rarity to meet young girls of not more than eight years old who already had their *satavno*. A woman's personal capital accumulated by her work is greatly enlarged at the time of her marriage by many presents which she receives at the wedding ceremony from her own and her husband's relatives. This custom of presenting gifts to the bride forms one of the principal parts of the wedding ceremony among the Georgians, and has an official and public character. Every gift and donor are made known to the public by a specially appointed person who conducts the ceremony. He is called *mkepari*, meaning "barker," as we have already mentioned in the chapter dealing with marriage customs. To these wedding presents is usually added a portion of the bride's mother's *satavno*, and if the bride is an only daughter she may inherit the full amount of her mother's capital.

The woman's capital is at her personal disposal, and no member of her family, not even her husband, has a right to touch it. She may use it as she desires. And her capital may not be used to pay any debts or obligations of the family.

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[1] Machabeli: V.

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422 The individual property rights of Georgian women are strikingly similar to the property rights of women in Egypt, where the woman's property "remains generally at her disposal, and she retains in contracts the right to leave her husband and to keep her property together with the bride gift."[8]

422 428 Among the Svans,[9] the wife is the sole proprietor of her dowry and without her consent no part of it can be alienated. If arable land forms a part of the dowry, the husband has a right to make use of it only with the permission of his wife. He is nothing more than a caretaker of her property, and not her master and lord.

The property of a woman is inherited by her children. If it is not large, the only inheritor is her daughter; in the contrary case it is divided among all her children, male and female. The woman may lend her capital to a stranger at interest, and to members of her family as well. They are obliged to return it to her. If a woman dies childless, her property belongs to her parents; if they refuse to accept it, it goes to her husband.

586 589 In case of a divorce, if it is not the result of adultery, she receives her *sathavno* in full, which represents her life's security. She receives also an additional compensation.[10] The widow had full right to stay in the home of her deceased husband, or could return to her parental home, in which case she received her *sathavno* in full from the relatives of her dead husband.

Interesting facts concerning the property rights of the Georgian woman are given by E. Gabasvili[11] in an article printed in the Georgian journal, "Iveria."

2. Group Ownership—

421 After the discussion of individual property rights of the Georgian Highlanders, we shall review the question of group ownership. We find it expressed in the communal ownership of pasture grounds and forests and religious property.

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[8] Hobhouse: I, 183.
[9] Kovalevsky: a, II, 50.
[10] See "Divorce."
[11] Gabashvili.

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seizure (*akho*). New clearings were forbidden by the government and, if made, were done so only by special permission of the authorities.

Most forests were the property of the Church. Almost every investigator or mere traveler who has visited the country of the Georgian Highlanders describes the rich virgin forests belonging to the Church. We have already mentioned such forests in Svanetia,[21] as described by Bartolomei[22] and Bakradze.[23] The same situation was found among the Khevsurs. The forests representing Church property are called by the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, *sakhato* forests, and they are usually situated around the sanctuaries or not far from them. Such forests are very easily recognized by their large old trees. No one is permitted to approach these trees or to break off their branches.

Besides the forests, the Church property consists of arable land, vineyards, flocks of sheep, and church utensils and vessels.

All members of every community are members of the local sanctuary, the arable land, and pasture grounds (*sakhato mitsebi,* of property." The property of the sanctuary (*khati*) is called *sakhato,* and consists of different buildings representing the sanctuary, the arable land, and pasture grounds (*sakhato mitsebi,* meaning "church lands"). Besides the above-mentioned property of the *khati,* there are also silver and copper vessels and utensils necessary in the brewing of beer, called *ludi,* and for church festivals. All the property of the *khati* is regarded as common property of all the *mogantzuri.* The supervision and care of the church property is entrusted to the attendants of the sanctuary—*dekanozi, khutsi, dasturi,* and others.

Almost every sanctuary in Khevsuria and Pshavia possessed large copper pots, valued at from one hundred to two hundred rubles, and used for brewing beer from barley.[24] Some sanctuaries possessed silver vessels of different form and size, with the names of the donors inscribed on them, and worth from one to

[21] See Chapter III.
[22] Bartolomei: 151-3.
[23] Bakradze: 51.
[24] Eristov: 99.

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twenty thousand rubles. Dr. Radde (1878) relates that he found silver vessels in a sanctuary in Khevsuria valued at fifteen hundred rubles. "Diese gefaesse bilden den hauptsaechlichsten Reichtum des heidnischen Tempels. Im vorliegenden Falle konnte ich sie wohl auf einen Worth von 1500 Rubel schaetzen."[25] Concerning the Pshav sanctuary *Lashris jvari*, Klaproth writes (1808):[26] "It is said to contain many golden images of saints, crosses and church utensils, for to this place the Pshavs and Tushes bring all the gold and silver that fall into their hands." All this wealth is in the custody of the *dekanozi*, who preserve them in well-hidden pits. About the same sanctuary Prince Vakhusht writes (1789):[27] "In Pshavia is a church erected by Kink Lasha, where there are preserved a great number of gold and silver icons (holy images), crosses, vessels and books. They call this church *Lashris-jvari*, and hold it in great veneration. There is not one Pshav or Khevsur who will keep gold and silver for himself; he has no right to it, but must present it to the church of *Lashris-jvari*."

Besides the above-named vessels and utensils, the sanctuaries also possessed vineyards,[28] which were situated in the Georgian province of Kakhethi, famous for its excellent varieties of wine. The wine from these vineyards, called *kulukhi*, is used for the church festivals, where enormous quantities of beer and wine are consumed by the thirsty throats of the mountaineers. These drinking orgies always end in fighting and brawling.

The purchase of a vineyard or other necessary properties for the sanctuary was made in the following manner: the *khevis-beri* of one of the sanctuaries called the people together on the meeting grounds and announced his wish to them concerning the purchase of a vineyard or some other property for the sanctuary, and asked them to make the assessments of money among themselves for this purpose. The necessary funds were contributed promptly and willingly by the community and given to *khevis-beri*, who arranged the purchase.

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[25] Radde: c, 259.
[26] Klaproth: a, 396.
[27] Vakhusht: 109-10.
[28] Zisserman: 233; Eristov: 99, 108.